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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the age of accountability in American education is presented. The point is made that this new element is causing many educators to think more precisely about their goals, how they can be achieved, and how they can determine the degree to which they have been achieved. State laws are appearing and school policies are being defined in response to the demands for accountability. In the past, quality in education has been described as input--numbers of teachers, courses, and dollars spent. Today, students, parents, and taxpayers are concerned about output--the results in terms of actual student learning. Several responses have been made to the demand for accountability. One has been performance contracting with private firms. This contracting is viewed as a means of strengthening the public schools. Another response is to give the consumer a choice of schools from which he can receive educational services. The voucher plans and alternative schools springing up across the nation may introduce a measure of competition and increased effectiveness of schools. All the various responses to accountability involve a demand for specified learning outcomes. Implications of the accountability movement for speech education include: (1) The curriculum must be re-evaluated; (2) Criterion-referenced measurement systems must be introduced. It is concluded that the education profession must be held accountable for results and that evaluation must receive top priority on the list of educational goals. (Author/CK)

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ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION IN THE 70's: AN OVERVIEW

by

Stephen Young

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The Chicanos in San Diego, Phoenix, Denver, and Dallas, the Puerto Ricans in New York City and Newark, the Indians in Minneapolis, the blacks in countless communities, and ad hoc white citizen groups everywhere are upset with the schools. Packed galleries at school board meetings are common occurrences. Many people, including those satisfied with their childrens' progress, want to know how their educational dollars are being spent. More important, they want to know the quality of the return on their educational investment.

In the past, children were primarily held accountable for individual success in the classroom. More recently, a share of the responsibility was handed to the family environment. But now the finger of accountability is pointing in a variety of directions. Administrators and teachers are being held responsible for the improvement, or lack of improvement in the performance of their students.

THE CALL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY: WHY?

There are many reasons why USOE officials, congressmen, school board members, and citizens are demanding accountability; but the major causes are high costs and low pupil achievement.

Education is big business. Our public schools enroll 44 million students, employ two million teachers and account for the expenditure of 45 million dollars in tax funds annually.[1]

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[1]Jack Stenner, "Accountability by Public Demand," American Vocational Journal, XLVI (February, 1971), 34.

A Gallup Poll of public attitudes toward education has shown that Americans rate the financial crisis as the number one problem of the public schools.[1] Local taxpayers want to know how well their educational dollars are being spent if they are to be asked again and again to approve new bond issues and support school programs. No one knows, for example, what it costs on the average to increase a student's reading ability by one year. All we know is what it costs to keep him seated for one year. Advocates of accountability feel it would make much more sense if we moved from a "per-pupil" cost to a "learning-unit" cost.[2] One of the reasons why the public is demanding accountability is because they want to know the cost-effectiveness of the schools.

Another important reason why there has been increased concern with the schools is low pupil achievement. The public schools have particularly failed the disadvantaged. Gary School Board President, Alfonso D. Holliday, says that the basic reason why they are trying performance contracting is the gross underachievement of their children. Pupil achievement was so low that they were ready to try any new approaches available.[3]

In the past educators have made no moves to measure results and proclaim their successes in terms of output - the performance

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[1]George Gallup, "The Third Annual Survey of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 1971," Phi Delta Kappan, LIII (September, 1971), 35.

[2]Leon M. Lessinger, "Robbing Dr. Peter To Pay Paul: Accounting for Our Stewardship of Public Education," Educational Technology, XI (January, 1971), 11.

[3]"Performance Contracting: Why the Gary School Board Bought It and How," American School Board Journal, CLVIII (January, 1971), 19.

of students. At the same time, educational failures have been glaringly recognized. Today, one out of every four American children drops out of school.[1] If one airplane in every four crashed, passengers would be in a lynching mood. If one automobile in every four went out of control and produced a fatal accident, Detroit would be closed tomorrow. And yet, educators have failed to effectively arrest the economic and social fatalities which every dropout represents.

High dropout rates are not the only indicator of low pupil achievement. There are over 30,000 functional illiterates - people with less than a fifth grade reading ability - in the country today who hold high school diplomas.[2] Many schools are not providing the kind of education that produces rational, responsible, effective citizens. Because of this, business often has to re-train its employees. Ivar Berg's thesis is that public education does not give students the skills they need.[3] It is no wonder that the public has lost the confidence it once had in its educators. While educators have avoided the measurement and display of their successes, their failures have been measured and displayed outside the school system.

Although the basic reasons for the accountability movement are high costs and low pupil achievement, the underlying cause is a political one. The political mechanisms which supposedly

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[1]Lessinger, "Robbing," p. 12.

[2]Leon Lessinger, "Accountability for Results: A Basic Challenge for America's Schools," American Education, V (June-July, 1969), 2.

[3]Ivar E. Berg, Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery (New York, 1970).

make public schools accountable to their clients work clumsily and ineffectively. Public schools have become big business monopolies which legislators, school boards, and educators control. Parents have little effective control over what happens in the education of their children because the political channels are slow, clumsy, and difficult to manage.[1] Their demands for accountability are the product of frustration.

WHO IS CALLING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY?

The call for accountability has come from a variety of sources. Any teacher can verify the student cry for relevancy in the curriculum. Although student demands have often been weak or fluxuating, parental protests have gained strength. For instance, in September, 1967, a group of black adults protested school policies in Atlanta by disrupting a meeting of the board of education, staging a sit-in in the superintendent's office, and picketing several school buildings.[2] A study of thirteen cities[3] has revealed that citizen concern for accountability is being expressed in many different ways: One of the first actions of the Citizens Committee on Public Education in Philadelphia was to work for procedures to make the school board more accountable to the public. The Pupil Placement Committee in Rockford wanted

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[1]Judith Areen and Christopher Jencks, "Education Vouchers: A Proposal for Diversity and Choice," Teachers College Record, LXXI (February, 1971), 328.

[2]Arliss L. Roaden, "Citizen Participation in School Affairs in Two Southern Cities," Theory Into Practice, VIII (October, 1969), 255

[3]Luvern L. Cunningham and Raphael O. Nystrand, Citizen Participation in School Affairs: A Report to the Urban Coalition (Washington D.C., 1969), pp. 39-41.

to know if students in different but presumably equal schools achieved at different levels. The Ad Hoc Pickett Committee in Philadelphia asked for and received permission to participate in the formulation and application of criteria to evaluate the school principal. And the Oceanhill - Brownsville Governing Board members have assumed the right to dismiss teachers whom they deem ineffective.

A growing number of influential people in government have become convinced that the schools can be held accountable for results just as other important public and private agencies are. When the NEA president appeared before the House general subcommittee on education in November, 1969, he used input statistics (per-pupil expenditures, number of teachers holding degrees, level of teacher salaries, etc.) as evidence of the improvement in education from 1958 to 1968. At that time the subcommittee members expressed a dissatisfaction with those statistics. They indicated that educators have stressed the input side of education for too long. They wanted to hear about output - the productivity of the schools. The concept of accountability received a major push from the so-called Coleman Report, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," which empirically indicated that input into schools is not an accurate measurement of how good they really are.[1] Following the Coleman Report, the theory of accountability in education was developed and refined by Leon

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[1]Ron Schwartz, "Accountability: Special Editorial Report," Nation's Schools, LXXXV (June, 1970), 31.

Lessinger, professor of urban education at Georgia State University. Lessinger, associate commissioner for elementary and secondary education at USOE until January, 1970, grafted the concept of accountability onto federally funded projects under Titles VII and VIII of the Elementary-Secondary Education Act. He initiated a study of 86 projects which were subjected to performance evaluation by independent educational achievement auditors. On March 3, 1970, President Nixon added his support to the concept of educational accountability by emphasizing it in his education message.

School boards are beginning to make the concept of accountability a reality on many local scenes. For instance, the agreement between the New York City Board of Education and the United Federation of Teachers, for the period from September, 1969 to September, 1972, pledges a joint effort to develop objective criteria of professional accountability.[1] In February, 1971, the New York City Board of Education announced a dramatic new program to develop means for measuring the effectiveness of teachers. The Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey has been retained to devise an "accountability design" that will define the performance objectives of both students and staff members and will recommend an administrative structure for an accountability system.[2] The program will be designed to protect individual teachers. Successful teachers will be protected from

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[1]Leon M. Lessinger, "Focus on the Learner: Central Concern of Accountability in Education," Audiovisual Instruction, XV (June-July, 1970), 42.

[2]"Accountable to Whom? For What?" Saturday Review, LIV (March 20, 1971), 41.

unfair criticisms through proof of their effectiveness, and poor teachers will have an indication of the kind of retraining they need to improve their skill. Many more pronouncements from key groups and important decision-makers could be cited. Education has clearly entered a new age - the "Age of Accountability".

FOUNDATIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The call for accountability is a summons to review and reform the educational system. The concept rests on three foundations:

(1) It must be possible to demonstrate student learning by performance.

(2) There must be independent outside review of student achievement. This is dependent upon the development of valid appraisal methods.

(3) The public must have access to information about student performance. This implies that educators must respond to feedback. The public must have the ability to change those factors thought to be responsible for unsatisfactory performance.

RESPONSES TO ACCOUNTABILITY DEMANDS

There have been various plans proposed to meet the call for accountability. The most widely discussed approach is performance contracting. As defined by Leon Lessinger in a memorandum to the White House in December, 1969, performance contracting is an "educational engineering" process "whereby a school contracts with private firms, chosen competitively, to remove educational deficiencies on a guaranteed performance basis or suffer penalties. Without being told what program is to be used, the contractor is encouraged to innovate in a responsible manner. Upon successful

demonstration, the contractor's program is adopted by the school on a turnkey basis."[1]

Performance contracting began in Texarkana, Arkansas in 1969. The public schools contracted with Dorsett Educational Systems, Inc. of Norman, Oklahoma to teach reading and math to 301 potential dropouts. Payment to Dorsett was conditional on the degree of success they had in raising student achievement levels. The instructional approach used by Dorsett included Rapid Learning Centers where students spent two hours per day receiving programmed instruction via a learning machine. The program also included an unusual system of incentives which pupils received for achievement. Students were advanced an average of 1.5 grade levels in reading and mathematics - three times the national rate for disadvantaged youngsters.[2] And the dropout rate decreased from 20% to 2%.[3]

The federal audit of the Texarkana project was strongly critical. The auditors accused Dorsett of "teaching to the test". They said that the measured gains in achievement were invalid. However, this criticism has been called into question because the amount of contamination which occurred and what effect it really had is not clear.[4] Superintendent Edward Trice disagreed with the criticism. He felt that the amount of "teaching to the test" was insignificant.[5] Superintendent Trice demonstrated his

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[1]Schwartz, "Special Editorial Report," p. 32.

[2]"The Customers Pass the Test - Or Else," Business Week, No. 2141 (September 12, 1970), 42.

[3]"Performance Contracting: Clouds and Controversy Over Texarkana," Nation's Schools, LXXXVI (October, 1970), 88.

[4]Ibid., p. 85.

[5]Ibid., p. 86.

faith in the system by asking Dorsett to submit a proposal for the project's second year of operation. Dorsett withdrew their proposal during the early selection process and later Trice expressed his disappointment because he felt that they would have received the contract.

In spite of the many problems and criticisms which were experienced during that first year, Texarkana has continued its experiment in performance contracting. Local school officials admit that the problems of the first year's contract were probably caused by the fact that the administrators didn't know much about performance contracting when they started.[1] However, school officials in Texarkana have learned much about how to make performance contracting work effectively. Other schools have been able to profit by their mistakes.

In spite of the controversy surrounding Texarkana, performance contracting was quickly adopted for experimentation in many states. By September, 1970, 150 school districts were negotiating contracts with more than 40 companies.[2] Performance contracting received a major push in September, 1970, when the Office of Economic Opportunity launched a 6.5 million dollar performance contracting experiment. The program has involved 28,000 students in 21 school districts and contracts with six private companies. 18 school districts have held contracts with the private companies. The remaining three school districts have used internal incentive

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[1]"Texarkana: The Second Year Around," Nation's Schools, LXXXVII (March, 1971), 33.

[2]"The Customers Pass the Test - Or Else," Business Week, No. 2141 (September 12, 1970), 42.

contracts with teachers. The six private companies involved in the experiment are different sizes and use different instructional approaches with varying amounts and types of technological equipment. The OEO experiment was clearly designed to compare programs, evaluate various instructional approaches, and assess the general effectiveness of performance contracting. The experiment had built in precautions to guard against the possibility of teaching to the test:

(1) The contractors did not know which standardized tests would be used to measure achievement.

(2) 75% of the payment was based on standardized test scores. 25% of the payment was based on a criterion-referenced performance test which was developed specifically for this purpose.

(3) Student skills were tested before the experiment and during the experiment. They will also be tested sometime during the 1971-72 school year to determine retention.

(4) If it is determined that "teaching to the tests" has occurred, the OEO has the authority to require the company to return all funds paid.[1]

The full results of the OEO experiment are not yet available.

A performance contract initiated in Gary, Indiana in September, 1970 has involved more money, more responsibility, and a longer period of time than any other written contract. In spite of the fact that most contractors have handled only one or two subjects, Gary placed its entire Banneker Elementary School in the hands of California's Behavioral Research Laboratories. The first year has been rated a success. In startling contrast to the previous term, when three-quarters of Banneker's pupils

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[1]John Oliver Wilson, "Performance Contracting: An Experiment In Accountability," Instructor, LXXX (June-July, 1971), 22.

scored below national norms in reading and math, 73% of the school's 850 children - all of whom are black - met or exceeded those norms during 1970-71. At the same time, the per pupil cost of operating Banneker was only $830 - about $94 less than Gary's average. Yet BRL, which promises to pay a penalty for every Banneker pupil who does not meet approved standards, received a substantial profit on its $663,000 gross.[1]

Educators must remain cautious in evaluating the Gary program. During the first year there were many difficulties in the administration of instruction and evaluation.[2] In spite of the first year's problems, school officials now claim to be better organized and predict even greater success in the future. The school's faculty voted unanimously to continue the experiment and a survey of Banneker parents indicated that 87% wanted BRL to remain in charge.[3]

Using the concept of performance contracting, some schools have tried similar incentive contracts with teachers. They have offered teachers bonus pay contingent upon the academic improvement of their students. Reading teachers in Keokuk, Iowa found incentive contracts educationally and financially successful.[4] Other similar programs in Portland, Dallas, and Washington D.C. indicate that teachers can benefit financially from incentive contracts.[5] However, incentive programs are small and very few

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[1]"Success In Gary," Newsweek, LXXVIII (October, 11, 1971), 66.

[2]James A. Mecklenburger and John A. Wilson, "The Performance Contract In Gary," Phi Delta Kappan, LII (March, 1971), 406-10.

[3]"Success In Gary," Newsweek, p. 66.

[4]Jerry D. Reynolds, "Performance Contracting . . . Proceed With Caution," English Journal, LX (January, 1971), 102-6.

[5]"Outlook For Teacher Incentives," Nation's Schools, LXXXVI (November, 1970), 51-4.

teachers are willing to participate. There are various reasons for the lack of teacher enthusiasm with incentive contracts:

(1) Many teachers are wives earning a supplemental income. They do not have a strong enough desire for more money to assume the risks of an incentive program.

(2) Some teachers feel it brings competition and distrust among fellow teachers. However, this is not a problem when the school contracts with groups of teachers rather than with individual teachers.

(3) Teachers are influenced by national teacher organizations. The national organizations feel that incentive contracts are a threat to their across-the-board bargaining position.[1]

The performance contracting concept, using the turnkey approach advocated by charles Blaschke and his associates,[2] offers a low-risk, low-cost vehicle for school experimentation and reform. After a contractor has demonstrated an instructional approach under a contract, the school board should evaluate all relevant cost, procedure, achievement and performance data in order to decide whether to incorporate the program into the whole school. The contract should require the company to guarantee an equivalent level of efficiency for the incorporation of the new program into the entire local system. If the school board desires to use the program, the contractor should be required to assist in retraining teachers and making administrative and technological changes. This turnkey system can provide effective reform - the educator can know the effectiveness and relative costs of the

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[1]"Outlook for Teacher Incentives," Nation's Schools, p. 54.

[2]Charles Blaschke, Peter Briggs, and Reed Martin, "The Performance Contract - Turnkey Approach to Urban School Reform," Educational Technology, X (September, 1970), 45-8.

alternative programs before he incorporates anything into the school. When school reform can be done on the basis of fact rather than theory, many political and administrative problems do not present themselves. Performance contracting is not an end in itself. It would be neither wise nor desirable to see the public schools fragmented into endless contractor-operated learning centers. The turnkey phase is vital if performance contracting is to realize its full potential in education.

Performance contracting has experienced phenomenal growth in the United States. In fiscal 1969 only $25,000 was spent by the public schools on performance contracts. It has been projected that in fiscal 1971, the public schools will spend between $100 and $150 million on performance contracts.[1]

In spite of this growth, performance contracting must still be considered an unproven concept. Most of the programs have been geared to improving reading and math skills in students who are performing substantially below the national norms. No one knows whether the concept can be adapted in all other educational programs. Whether an organization that has to make a profit to survive can maintain its commitment to the children in its care is an open question. Whether the complexities of human aptitude, attitude, and motivation in the classroom will always be more susceptible to the behavioral-scientist-businessman than to the philosophical-traditional-schoolman remains to be proven.

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[1]Stan Elam, "The Chameleon's Dish," Phi Delta Kappan, LII (March, 1971), 402.

There are three basic dangers which threaten the concept of performance contracting in education:

(1) Perhaps too much will be expected of it too soon. If educators arrive at a hasty evaluation of the concept before experimenters have had a chance to solve all its problems, no one will know what the true potential of the program was.

(2) Inadequate planning, misapplication, and poor management will discredit the whole concept. Although the Gary Project has appeared successful, that contract is an example of an agreement that was reached without adequate planning. As a result, they have experienced some difficulty.[1]

(3) If measurement procedures are not refined, performance contracting may disintegrate. Robert Stake and James Wardrop, of the Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation at the University of Illinois, have stated flatly that "individual student gain on currently available standardized tests should not be used as a criterion of successful instruction."[2] Short term achievement cannot be measured reliably by these tests. One should expect 25% of the students to show a year's progress in achievement entirely due to the error factor in such tests. If students were tested and retested on a parallel form the next day, one should expect to have one child out of four gain "miraculously" a year or more in achievement. This indicates the need to develop more reliable measures of individual student performance.

Performance Contracting is not the only response to the accountability movement. Another proposal for meeting accountability demands is the voucher plan. Under such a plan, parents would be given a voucher equal to the cost of educating their children in public schools which they could then spend at any school which met certain minimal standards. Parents would not be forced to send their children to a school simply because it was around the

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[1]Mecklenburger and Wilson, p. 406-10.

[2]"The Death Knell of Performance Contracting?" Educational Product Report, IV (May, 1971), inside cover.

corner. A voucher system would provide equity of educational opportunity and the use of parental choice would force the schools to become responsive and accountable for performance.

The voucher system has very few staunch supporters because it is an abstract theory which, to the knowledge of this writer, has never been experimentally tested. The Office of Economic Opportunity is currently conducting feasibility studies to determine whether they will experimentally test the voucher plan. Many administrative problems must be solved before a voucher plan can be used. Proponents of the plan are busy proposing solutions to the problems. Even the president of the American Federation of Teachers has admitted that those who oppose the plan have found themselves at a serious disadvantage.[1] As each new detailed objection has been registered, proponents of the voucher plan have added new regulations and safeguards designed to eliminate the objection.

Most proposals for voucher plans include an Educational Voucher Agency which would be established in a district to administer the vouchers. This governing board would oversee the use of vouchers by parents and schools. Although a voucher system would have to be regulated closely for it to work correctly, two general rules could be used to oversee the operation:

(1) No "public" money should be used to support "private schools."
(2) Any group that operates a "public" school should be elegible for "public" subsidies through the voucher system.[2]

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[1]David Seldon, "Vouchers - Solution or Sop?" Teachers College Record, LXXI (February, 1971), 365.

[2]Areen and Jencks, p. 330.

These rules, however, are interpreted by proponents of the voucher plan with a refined definition of "public" and "private". No voucher school would be "public" or "private" in the present sense of the words. A public school would be one which charges no tuition and is open to anyone on a nondiscriminatory basis. It would also provide full information about itself to any interested person. On the other hand, a private school would be one which charged tuition or excluded applicants in a discriminatory way. It would also be considered private if it withheld information about itself.

One plan proposes a kind of internal voucher system under which the student and his family would be offered a variety of types of schooling, all within the public school system.[1] The public school system would offer a number of alternative schools in a wide geographical area. These schools would represent a variety of educational philosophies, instructional systems, and types of training.

The voucher plan seems to offer several advantages:

(1) It would provide the means to prevent racial and economic discrimimation. This separation in the soc ety would no longer be a function of the public schools.

(2) It would encourage school reform by breaking down the bureaucracy. Reform would come as a result of parents exercising choice. Schools would be forced to be responsive and accountable for results.

(3) It would insure adequate resources for the education of <u>every</u> child.

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[1]Mario Fantini, "Options for Students, Parents, and Teachers: Public Schools of Choice," <u>Phi Delta Kappan</u>, LII (May, 1971), 541-3.

(4) School communities would be based on other shared values besides geographical location.[1]

In spite of these apparent advantages, it is entirely premature at the present time to decide whether the voucher plan is good or bad. A complete strategy for a voucher system must be experimentally tested before we can ever begin to evaluate its potential in education.

Whether the schools use performance contracting, a voucher plan, or some other system to achieve accountability, comparing the performance of schools can present some serious problems. In some schools, children come from homes which do not place a high priority on learning. They go to antiquated schools with inadequate equipment. Rooms are crowded, attendance is poor, and teachers spend a great deal of their time keeping order. In other schools, the children come from the homes of parents with college degrees. The buildings are new and well-equiped. The pupils are regular in attendance and eager to learn. If these schools are going to play against each other in the accountability game, some of them will need a handicap. Barber indicates that there is a need for a statistical formula that will take into account all of the important learning variables to arrive at a teacher or school performance index.[2] One proposed methodology which could be used in solving this type of problem is a multiple regression analysis of the relationship between

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[1]Stephen Arons, "Equity, Option, and Vouchers," Teachers College Record, LXXI (February, 1971), 360.

[2]William R. Barber, "Accountability: Bane or Boon?" School And Community, LVII (April, 1971), 14.

pupil performance and a broad array of pupil, teacher, and school characteristics.[1]

Any approach used in achieving accountability is dependent upon an outside review of student performance. The Independent Educational Accomplishment Audit, as it has been defined by Lessinger, is a process very similar to a fiscal audit. The IEAA has six essential phases:

(1) The Pre-Audit: As a result of discussions between the auditors, staff, students, and adult members of the community, the objectives of the program to be reviewed are established.

(2) The Translation: In conference with local people, the auditors determine what evidence will be used to indicate whether the objectives have been met and decide what methods will be used to gather the evidence. This is a translation of local educational goals into behavioral or performance objectives.

(3) Instrumentation and Methodology: The auditors determine the instruments to be used in measuring student performance. Validated methods are adopted for use or new methods are designed.

(4) Establishment of Review Calendar: The calendar is a written agreement which everyone honors. It indicates the nature of the reviews and appropriate logistics - who, what, when, where, why, how long, etc.

(5) The Assessment Process: The auditors carry out the procedures agreed upon in the pre-audit, translation, and instrumentation phases as codified in the review calendar.

(6) The Public Report: The auditor files a report at an open meeting. He analyzes cost-effectiveness and gives specific commendations and recommendations as they relate to local objectives.[2]

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[1]Stephen M. Barro, "An Approach To Developing Accountability Measures for the Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, LII (December, 1970), 196-205.

[2]Leon M. Lessinger, "How Educational Audits Measure Performance," Nation's Schools, LXXXV (June, 1970), 33-4.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY MOVEMENT FOSTERS CHANGE

As the accountability movement becomes a reality in the public schools, many changes will occur in educational philosophy, instructional methods, and community relations. Some of the changes which can be expected are:[1]

(1) Educators will adopt a systematic approach to instruction. Accountability cannot be achieved without it. Banathy's approach is a good example of systematic instruction.[2] Each step in the system is equally important. It requires the instructor to:

A. Specify instructional objectives in behavioral or measurable terms.
B. Preassess learner capabilities.
C. Identify and define alternative methods to advance learners from their input level of capability to the desired terminal performance level specified in step A.
D. Define relevant measures for postassessment.

(2) In the future, all courses will be defined in terms of performance objectives which the student will achieve. The use of systematic instruction by educators and the independent auditing process both imply that instructional objectives must be specified in behavioral or measurable terms. School boards realize that the first step in achieving accountability is to establish objective performance criteria.[3]

(3) The major reform brought by accountability will be an expanded notion of assessment. The pursuit of accountability could be frightening and potentially destructive if we continue

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[1]Individuals interested in exploring statements of anticipated professional progress should consult a book by Leon M. Lessinger, Every Kid A Winner: Accountability in Education (New York, 1970).

[2]Bela H. Banathy, Instructional Systems (Palo Alto, Calif., 1968).

[3]David E. Wagoner, "Do You Know Anything At All About How Well or How Much Your Teachers Teach?" American School Board Journal, CLVIII (August, 1970), 21-2.

to use limited, restricted means of assessment. It is widely recognized that standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests are not valid instruments for measuring what a student has learned while covering specific material during a specific period of time.[1] Criterion-referenced measures will be developed which ascertain the student's status with respect to some criterion, ie., the standard specified in the performance objective. The student will be compared with a locally established criterion rather than a national or local norm.[2] Measurement, as noted earlier in this paper, will also be verified by independent outside review. Evaluation will not just be a professional exercise of educators. There will be new creative means of gathering "evidence". To say that scientific measurement is limited to narrow so-called objective tests is to display ignorance of the rich field of assessment and inability to forsee the rapid development of creative output instruments and strategies which money and attention can promote.[3]

Although current emphasis is aimed at measuring cognitive achievement, accountability will eventually force educators to face the problem of evaluating the over-all impact of instruction on the child. Assessment procedures will be developed to measure the total development of the child in the affective domain.

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[1]Ralph W. Tyler, "Testing For Accountability," Nation's Schools, LXXXVI (December, 1970), 37-9.

[2]Jason Millman, "Reporting Student Progress: A Case for a Criterion-Referenced Marking System," Phi Delta Kappan, LII (December, 1970), 226.

[3]Leon M. Lessinger, "Accountability and Curriculum Reform," Educational Technology, X (May, 1970), 57.

(4) The teacher's concept of his role will change from, "As a teacher I will perform this function," to "These are desirable goals for this student; how can I assist him in achieving them?" He will be a learning facilitator marshaling resources, diagnosing problems, prescribing alternatives, and providing feedback. He will not be a "dispenser of knowledge".

(5) The concept of aptitude will change. Bloom's research led him to conclude that, given sufficient time, as many as 95% of students can learn a subject to a high level of mastery.[1] In the future, a student's aptitude will be considered the amount of time required for him to achieve mastery of a given task. In this context education will not be concerned with classifying a student as either gifted or as an underachiever.

(6) There will be a new educational committment - "Every child shall learn." (The old committment was -"Every child shall have access to an education.") Accountability demands a "can do" spirit of enterprize. As emphasis shifts from teaching to learning, the teaching-learning paradox will disappear. Teachers will not accept failure. They will try alternate methods if something isn't working.

(7) Educational requirements will be radically altered. Instead of requiring "X hours of educational exposure" because it is "good," the emphasis will be placed on the minimum amount of learning outcomes which must be demonstrated. Instead of certifying that a student has spent so much time or earned so many credits, the schools will certify that he is able to perform specific tasks.

[1]Benjamin S. Bloom, "Learning For Mastery," UCLA Evaluation Comment, (May, 1968), 4.

(8) The technology of instruction is going to advance by leaps and bounds. The search for effective instructional procedures will validate our technology of instruction. We will know what works and what doesn't work.

(9) There will no longer be major reliance on group instruction. Instruction will be individualized. Group instruction will only be used when it is warranted by the instructional objectives.

(10) The curriculum will be marked by variety and will become more relevant. If instruction is to be held accountable before the citizenry, their first requirement will be that objectives should be relevant to student needs.

(11) Educational administration will be localized and characterized by popular participation. Accountability cannot function as a purely professional exercise. There will be clearer communication and rational understanding between the public and school officials about the discharge of educational responsibility.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS

A nationwide sampling of school board members indicated that two-thirds of the nation's boardmen look with favor on performance contracting.[1] Although almost 90% of the nation's school administrators are generally satisfied with the job teachers are doing today, 72% express strong support for some system of teacher accountability.[2] The basic reason for this expressed

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[1]"Two Out Of Three Boardmen Buy Performance Contracting," American School Board Journal, CLVIII (November, 1970), 35-6.

[2]"Opinion Poll: Large Majority Favors Teacher Accountability," Nation's Schools, LXXXVI (December, 1970), 33.

approval seems to be the pressure of public demands and the apparent advantages of accountability.

On the other hand, public school teachers oppose accountability measures: 88% oppose incentive contracts, 71% oppose the voucher plan, and 48% oppose performance contracting with an outside agency.[1] The official viewpoint of teacher organizations is also negative. The American Federation of Teachers calls for the outright abolition of performance contracting, and, although the National Education Association approves internal incentive contracts, it disapproves performance contracting with an outside agency.[2]

WHO BENEFITS FROM ACCOUNTABILITY?

Educators have urged Congress to halt the voucher experiment proposed by the OEO. They argue that the plan will undermine the public schools - that individuals will leave the system in large numbers.[3] Their argument implies that the public school they are attempting to defend is either very inefficient or very unpopular. When NEA's legislative head told a senate subcommittee that performance contracts might discredit public schools in the eyes of the public,[4] he spoke the truth - but not in the way that he intended.

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[1]"Teacher Opinion Poll: Accountability, Vouchers, and Performance Contracting," Today's Education, LX (December, 1971), 13.

[2]"How Education Groups View Contracting," Nation's Schools, LXXXVI (October, 1970), 86-7.

[3]John Beckler, "Voucher Plan Faces Scrutiny of Congress," School Management, XV (June, 1971), 6.

[4]"Performance Contracting Sparks More Controversy," Education U.S.A., (September 7, 1970), 3.

Why must educators be nervous about accountability? It is the conscientious teacher who stands to benefit from this movement. Accountability opens new doors for the teaching profession. If it is possible to obtain better results, teachers need to know how. The profession can observe, adopt, and improve upon what is commendable in any performance contract or voucher experiment. The professional teacher will meet the challenges of accountability by improving his skills, methods and materials. He will show himself to be creditable as a teacher. If he is too professionally insecure to do that, then he should not be a teacher.

The welfare and growth of each student is the central concern of the accountability movement. Students will receive the most benefit as the schools become more effective. P. Kenneth Komoski contends that the largest single group of unprotected consumers is made up of 50 million school children who are required to use many inadequately validated educational materials.[1] Accountability will provide students with consumer protection by placing emphasis on extensive evaluation of all educational materials and methods.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SPEECH-COMMUNICATION TEACHERS

As speech-communication teachers become accountable to the citizenry, one of the first questions for discussion will be the relevancy of the curriculum. The curriculum will be re-evaluated

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[1]P. Kenneth Komoski, "Protecting the Ultimate Educational Consumer - The Learner," Educational Product Report, IV (May, 1971).

and designed to emphasize the communication skills which people need and use most. The trend toward relevant, individualized instruction will probably result in a fragmentation of the curriculum. It will probably be composed of a variety of specialized courses and minicourses which will emphasize interpersonal communication.

The alert speech teacher will not wait until local demands require him to become accountable for results. He will begin a program of strict self-evaluation to determine the validity of his instructional methods. He will be ready to demonstrate his expertise. In order to do this, he must adopt a systematic instructional approach similar to the one identified in this paper.

Any instructor who desires to meet accountability demands on the local scene should begin by specifying performance objectives for every unit of instruction.[1] Every performance objective should specify three things:

(1) What learning is to be achieved? This is a pre-determined outcome. What task will the student perform to demonstrate his achievement?

(2) Under what conditions will the student demonstrate this task?

(3) What standard of achievement or criteria will be used to determine the acceptability of the student's performance?

For an informative speaking unit, what will the student do to demonstrate achievement? What specific criteria will be used to determine the acceptability of this performance? What specific tasks will the student perform to demonstrate learning in group

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[1]Any instructor not familiar with performance or behavioral objectives should consult the following book as an introduction: Robert F. Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives (Palo Alto, California, 1968).

discussion, speech organization, persuasion, or interviewing? Objectives must be specified in concrete, measurable terms if teachers are going to know whether or not they have met their responsibility. Many persons involved in speech education are already developing behavioral objectives. In 1971, the Speech Communication Association has sponsored two workshops on behavioral objectives - one at the Summer Conference in Chicago, and another at the Annual Convention in San Francisco. The Behavioral Objectives Task Force of the Instructional Development Division of SCA is compiling a bank of objectives in speech-communication. Teachers will be able to use the bank in developing local curriculum and students could use the behavioral objectives bank to select their own learning objectives on an individual basis.

Any speech teacher who desires to be prepared for accountability demands on the local scene should immediately begin to face the problems of assessment in communication. One major problem in this area is preassessment. Methods must be developed to observe and describe entering behavior. It is impossible to measure improvement without objective, concrete preassessment. The other major type of assessment problem is post-evaluation. Criterion-referenced methods of measurement must be developed for postassessment. A student's performance which demonstrates a communication skill or knowledge of communication theory should be evaluated according to the criterion established in the behavioral objective. Using a criterion-referenced method of evaluation, it will be possible to determine whether or not a student has acquired a skill. The teacher will not be concerned about giving the student a letter

grade. He will be concerned about whether or not the student needs further instruction in order to acquire the skill.

Before the speech-communication instructor can become accountable in the fullest sense of the word, he must also become concerned with the effectiveness of his instruction in the affective domain. Such things as speech anxiety and self-concept in communication need to be evaluated. Some standardized tests in psychological measurement, which are currently available, could be used to help solve this evaluation problem. The over-all impact of instruction on the student must be considered. However, the problems of definition and evaluation in the cognitive domain should be solved before teachers spend time investigating affective objectives and evaluation problems.

When the speech instructor looks at all of the problems which must be solved in order to demonstrate accountability, the task seems insurmountable. However, the problems <u>can</u> be solved one by one, using a systematic approach to instruction, and dealing with each learning unit individually. It may be a long tedious process, but it can be done. It must be done.

CONCLUSION

The education profession must be held accountable for results. In the past, the profession has been unresponsive to accountability issues because the expectation of accountability is not highly visible within the norms of the profession. Ill-formed professional attitudes toward accountability cannot be taken lightly. Many professionals refuse to believe that anyone possesses adequately

refined evaluation technology to make judgments about himself and/or his colleagues. They rationalize their way out of intensive performance evaluation on the basis of inadequately perfected technology, when the real reason is that they are unwilling to face the prospects of negative appraisal. If evaluation procedures are imperfect, then educators need to get busy defining performance outcomes and inventing adequate measuring instruments. The public is demanding accountability and it is impossible without skillful evaluation. As educators become more adept at appraisal, and as accountability norms are established in the profession, the fear of accountability will diminish. Evaluation must receive top priority on the list of educational goals. The clients who support the schools will not tolerate impotence much longer. If teachers continue to fear and fight the accountability movement, it will be the result of a superficial analysis on their part, a misreading of the depth of discontent with things as they are by the taxpaying public, and a turning away from the central and most noble concern of the education profession - the welfare and growth of each student.

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Author's Abstract

Accountability and Evaluation in the '70s: An Overview, **Stephen Young, East Noble High School, Kendallville, Indiana.**

American education has entered an age of accountability. State laws are appearing and school policies are being defined in response to the demands for accountability. In the past, quality in education has been described as input – numbers of teachers, courses, and dollars spent. Today, students, parents, and taxpayers are concerned about output – the results in terms of actual student learning.

The cry for accountability has precipitated several responses. One growing response has been performance contracting with private firms, despite the problems of the first performance contracting project in Texarkana. Performance contracting is visualized as a means of strengthening, rather than supplanting, public schools. In fact, some contracts do not involve private firms at all but are made directly between the school and the teachers. Another response to the cry for accountability is to give the consumer a choice of schools from which he can receive educational services. The voucher plans and alternative schools sprouting up across the nation may introduce a measure of competition and increased effectiveness of schools. All the various responses to accountability involve a demand for specified learning outcomes, thus creating an emphasis on the development of behavioral objectives.

The accountability movement holds many implications for speech education: the curriculum must be re-evaluated, teachers must know specifically what they are trying to teach and whether or not they are successful. This is impossible without behavioral objectives. However, the major problem of speech education in an age of accountability is evaluation, specifically the need for criterion-referenced measurement systems.

The age of accountability is causing many educators to think more precisely about their goals, how they can be achieved, and how they can determine the degree to which they have been achieved.